GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ATOMIC ENERGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1942
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2016
Awareness Campaign on Nuclear Energy
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Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Government has carried out any awareness campaign to educate the public about the enormous peaceful benefits of nuclear energy and if so,the details thereof;

(b)whether cases of nuclear exposure to local population and scientists/employees working in different nuclear plants across the country have been reported;

(c)if so, the details thereof, during the last two years and the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) whether wide use of nuclear energy is also proving to be a boon in the fields like medical treatment and agriculture; and

(e)if so, the details thereof and the proactive plan proposed to be taken up by the Government for timely completion of nuclear plants in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (Dr. JITENDRA SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir. Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has been carrying out an extensive public outreach programme to spread awareness about nuclear power and all its related aspects based on a multipronged approach.

(b)&(c) There has been no incidence of radiation exposure to general public beyond stipulated annual dose limits in over 46 years of nuclear power plant operations in the country. There has been no incident of radiation exposure to scientists / employees of the department beyond stipulated annual dose limit of 30 milliSievert in the last two years (2014 and 2015) in nuclear power plants. However, one temporary worker received an annual dose of 17.36 milliSievert in the year 2014 as against an annual dose limit of 15 milliSievert.

(d)&(e) In addition to power generation, the radioisotopes produced in the research and power reactors are used for radiation sterilization of medical products, production of radiopharmaceuticals, nuclear medicine and cancer treatment. The radioisotopes are also used for production of improved varieties of seeds in agriculture, radiation processing of food items like spices, onions, potatoes and mangoes. Continuous research, development and deployment of new and advanced technologies for application of atomic energy have been a priority area for the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has established Sludge Hygienisation technologies where sludge is hygienised due to inactivation of pathogens by radiation effects, producing high quality manure for applications in agriculture. A large range of novel diagnostic and therapeutic applications of new radioisotopes have also been developed.

The government has taken several enabling steps to increase the nuclear power capacity. "In principle' approval of sites for locating future reactors based both on indigenous technologies and with foreign technical cooperation has been accorded. The government has also entered into enabling agreements with foreign countries for nuclear cooperation including supply of fuel. The Atomic Energy Act has been amended recently to enable Joint Ventures of Public Sector Companies to set up nuclear power projects.

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